



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of February 22, 2021

Report covers from February 6, 2021 to February 19, 2021

Items requiring Board vote or discussion are noted with an asterisk (*)

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Evaluation of Options for Police Body/Cruiser Camera Systems (*)

At the last meeting, the Board decided to put the possible purchase of body and cruiser cameras off until the Fall Town Meeting of 2021. In the meantime, the Board wanted to develop a process for the evaluation of different possible options. A variety of vendors exist, along with solutions ranging from in-house management (lower cost) to turn-key systems managed by third parties (higher cost).

One way to evaluate the matter would be to develop standards for the Town's desired level of staff effort required for and the Town's desired level of security and transparency offered by a camera system. Those standards could be evaluated in a Request for Proposals that would rank vendor responses to factors of interest to the Town (ranking criteria). The development of the necessary criteria would need to involve input from the Police Department and the Board. The process would include price proposals and the Town would not have to select the lowest-cost system if another system was deemed more advantageous to the Town's goals. The process could unfold between now and when the Board begins to plan for the Fall Town Meeting.

Another avenue might be to bring a vendor in to make a presentation to the Board and to the public to begin learning more about the industry. The Police Department could potentially set up this type of presentation.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) State Approval of Essex Open Space and Recreation Plan

After much effort by the Town Planner, the State has approved the Town's update of its Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Open Space Committee began the process of updating the plan in 2016 and the Town Planner responded to State comments at that time. After the State reviewed the Town's revised draft (in response to those comments), the State issued a second round of comments, making it very difficult to attain approval. The Town Planner continued to work on the project and this new version of the Plan is good through May of 2023. I have uploaded the Plan to the Open Space Committee's web page.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Regional IT Planning Update

Several area communities are moving closer to a regional IT service delivery model with the Town of Danvers as the anchor community. At a virtual meeting on February 11, 2021, the planning group, which is being assisted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) via a grant, has now recommended the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will allow for more formalization around the concept of Danvers offering new services. Essex already has its disaster recovery replication streaming to Danvers on a continuous basis. Danvers would also like to begin offering other services, which participating communities can opt into based on needs. The MOU, which begins July 1, 2021, will be finalized by MAPC and I will bring it before the Board in the coming months for signature.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Integration of Temporary Additional Town Hall Fiber Switch

The new public safety facility will be connected to Town Hall via the Town's fiber optic system once the new spur to that building has been completed. In preparation for that link, I worked with our computer consultant recently to install a third fiber optic switch in Town Hall (in order to provide an additional fiber optic port for communication – all other ports are already in use). This work will allow us to keep the network running at the old building while we set up the network at the new building. Once the old building goes offline, the fiber optic communication port that had been dedicated to that building will be freed up, allowing us to use it for the new building. The additional Town Hall switch can then be removed and used as a second switch in the new building.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Planning for Relocation of Criminal Justice Information System Router

Presently, the Essex Police Department uses a dedicated State router to access various law enforcement resources over the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). That router will be relocated to the new building in the near future and I am working with CJIS personnel to prepare for that move. In order to keep the CJIS system available in both the old building and the new building simultaneously (after the router is moved but until the old building comes off line), we will back-feed the old building from the new building, using the Town's secure fiber optic network. I will continue to work with the necessary personnel to complete this move over the coming weeks.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Public Safety Building Audio/Visual Equipment Site Visit

I visited the new public safety building with our audio/visual consultant to go over the installation of the various audio/visual components for the building with our project contractor on February 8, 2021. We reviewed a list of all of the components which we had already purchased and compared the list to the specifications in the audio/visual change order that was approved in 2020. We were able to actually point out locations and mounting points for equipment in the training room and our contractor has been steadily retrieving equipment from my office for installation.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Public Safety Building Construction Project Update (*)

Chairman Pereen and I participated in weekly construction meetings with respect to the new public safety building on February 11 and 18, 2021. The project is moving into a final push to get interior finishes in place. Work has wrapped up with respect to many aspects of the building's interior and our contractor is still holding to a March 12, 2021 target date for at least a temporary certificate of occupancy.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Public Safety Building Roof Potential Installation Defect (*)

The Town was informed on February 10, 2021 by our general construction contractor (G&R Construction) that they have observed "numerous areas where the asphalt shingles are buckling" on the new roof of the public safety building that is under construction. I have also received inquiries from the general public with respect to noticing the same issue.

The roofing subcontractor (Capeway Roofing) believes that a temperature difference between the shingle material and the underlying substrate is to blame and is asserting that the problem would not have occurred if vented nail boards had been used under the shingles (non-vented boards were specified by the designer). Unbeknownst to the Town, Capeway questioned using the specified, three-tab shingles on non-vented nail boards and recommended a change to vented nail boards and architectural shingles (at no added cost).

According to G&R's letter, Capeway indicated at the time: "When installing asphalt shingles over nail board, the product should be vented as stated in the nail board manufacturer's data sheets. From prior experiences installing at 3-tab

shingle over non vented nail board, you will see all the seams from the substrate and buckling can occur”. Despite that warning and offer for a different product, a representative of our designer directed Capeway to proceed per the original design.

Presently, our designer is asserting that the shingles will flatten out and lay down normally and permanently once we move into some warmer weather. The designer maintains that the November roof installation has not yet seen hot enough weather for the shingles to take their final position. Our Owner’s Project Manager (OPM) is working to review the matter and has indicated that there should be no scenario under which the Town will be required to pay to correct any defects that might be confirmed as the investigation unfolds.

Chairman Pereen and I have begun to discuss the matter with Town Counsel and we are working to verify what shingle product was actually installed (brand, style, warranty) – there is some indication that even the originally-specified shingle was substituted for another three-tab product; and, whether we can get a representative of the shingle manufacturer to come out and assess the situation. We have begun to provide Town Counsel with a variety of project-related documents.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion with respect to next steps concerning this potential roof problem.**

(4) Public Safety Building Phone System Contract (*)

The fire and police departments use NetTelOne as a voice over IP (VOIP) phone vendor in the present building. This system works well since it is also in use at the Regional Dispatch Center and is fully integrated in that respect. In the new building, the departments plan to use the same vendor. All existing equipment will be moved from the old building to the new building and phones will be added at the new building (since the new building has more workstation positions). The installation portion of the contract will make the whole system work in the new building and will integrate communications from both public vestibules and with the new station alerting system. The contract also provides for monthly service going forward, which has been accounted for in the building budget for the upcoming fiscal year. NetTelOne is a vendor on the State Contract.

***Recommendation:* Board approval of the VOIP system installation and service contract.**

(5) Review of Base Plan for Demolition of Old Public Safety Building (*)

As the Board may recall, our design team had begun working to put together a base site plan for the demolition of the old public safety building, once fire and police have moved out. The team has now completed that plan and the Board should review at the present meeting to become acclimated to the demolition project, including site restoration and preparation for the antique fire pumper display shed.

Recommendation: Board review and discussion with respect to the base demolition plan.

(6) Change Order: Joint Filler for Epoxy Flooring at Public Safety Facility (*)

The epoxy flooring subcontractor recommends installing a joint filler between the elevated slab and the slab on grade in the apparatus bay. This will help in reducing potential for cracking of the epoxy floor at this joint if any movement occurs. The cost of this additional work is \$2,531.

Recommendation: Board approval of this item as part of Change Order 12.

(7) Change Order: Public Safety Building Bay Door Supports & Training Room Lights (*)

This change request includes two items, which were agreed to be performed on a time and materials basis, with the final cost totaling \$10,183.

The overhead door attachment detail was revised in accordance with a sketch issued by the designer, which changed from steel angles with embedded anchors to solid wood blocking.

The work required to finish the flush mount light fixtures in the training room was due to the change in fixture type to address the installation location in the drywall soffit. The labor component was verified in the field and is consistent with the submitted pricing.

Recommendation: Board approval of these items as part of Change Order 12.

(8) Change Order: Added Line Striping, Public Safety Facility Apparatus Bay (*)

Line striping was requested to be added in the apparatus bays to provide visual guidelines for backing vehicles into the bays. The striping is integral to the epoxy floor, requiring additional labor and materials to incorporate the second flooring color to delineate the stripes. The cost of this additional work is \$6,173.

Recommendation: Board approval of this item as part of Change Order 12.

(9) Change Order: Added Door Clearance Lights, Public Safety Building Bay Doors(*)

The contract drawings intended for signals to be installed at each overhead door to provide a visual indication that the door has opened far enough to provide adequate clearance for vehicles to exit. The infrastructure for wiring and installing was clearly called for in the electrical scope, however the lights themselves were not called for in the base contract scope and are required to be added by change order. The cost of this additional work is \$2,398.

Recommendation: Board approval of this item as part of Change Order 12.

(10) Change Order: Relocate Hand Wash Sink, Public Safety Facility (*)

As a result of the mechanical, electric, and plumbing coordination process, modifications were made to the kitchen layout to resolve a conflict with structural steel. The location of the hand wash sink was constrained and resulted in the refrigerator being too close to the kitchen hood. An alternative was considered, which would shift the refrigerator to the east wall, requiring that the dining table be shifted south and modified to a square shaped rather than rectangle.

The Fire Department preferred to maintain the existing refrigerator location and dining layout, resulting in identifying the best option to be shifting the hand wash sink from the originally specified freestanding location to installing it in the casework strip east of the training room doorway. The costs generally include removing the original sink and capping the drain line, patching/painting drywall, plumbing for the new sink, cutting opening in countertop and modifying casework drawers to false fronts. The cost of this additional work is \$6,145.

Recommendation: **Board approval of this item as part of Change Order 12.**

(11) Change Order:Soffit Ceiling Added, Public Safety Building Bunker Gear Room (*)

The Architect's Supplemental Information (ASI) #45 modified the ceiling configuration in the fire department bunker gear cleaning area to address the actual depth of structural steel and associated, lower mechanical, plumbing, and electrical work. To conceal a P-trap near the door frame, a soffit was added and the remaining ceiling was changed from hard ceiling to acoustic ceiling tile to facilitate future valve access. There is an additional credit owed for painting, which will be addressed separately. The cost of this additional work is \$1,787.

Recommendation: **Board approval of this item as part of Change Order 12.**

(12) Review of 100% Design Plans for Essex River Bridge Replacement Project

The design and planning for the replacement of the bridge over the Essex River on Route 133 has steadily continued and MassDOT provided copies of the 100% design plans to the Town for review recently. After review by several Town departments, the DPW's consulting engineer will be registering limited technical comments.

Presently, we understand the project schedule as follows: the project will be advertised by the State for bidding at the end of June, 2021. Bids will be opened in the fall of 2021 and the State should be able to award the construction contract by December, 2021. Actual construction work is presently estimated to begin in March of 2022, with a temporary bridge constructed next to the existing bridge by the summer of 2022. The temporary bridge will probably be in use through the spring of 2024, with project completion by early summer of 2024.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

I received the pothole log from the Department of Public Works for the month of January during the week of February 8, 2021. No potholes were reported during January.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

No items.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) School Budget Collaboration Group Meeting Summary (*)

Selectman Bradford, Finance Committee Chairman Buttrick and I participated in a school budget collaboration group meeting on February 12, 2021. The focus of the meeting was on whether the District was will to add more reserves to the fiscal year 2022 operating budget in order to decrease the apportionment amounts paid by each of the two towns. District personnel and officials are not inclined to utilize additional reserves unless they know that each community is committed to a program of regular Proposition 2 ½ overrides in the future. Otherwise, reserves available now will continue to be depleted in future budget cycles, which is not a sustainable plan.

The District has indicated that it generally requires budget increases of at least 3.5% each year to continue to deliver the current level of service. If the District is to operate within the constraints of Proposition 2 ½ each year, its program will need to be drastically restructured. District personnel and officials would like to know which path the two communities prefer to take. To that end, the three entities are arranging for a meeting involving both boards of selectmen, both finance committees, and the School Committee.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Chebacco Lake Environmental Planning Meeting Summary (*)

Selectman Phippen and I participated in a meeting involving Senator Bruce Tarr and representatives of the Chebacco Lake Association and Seaside Sustainability on February 16, 2021. The group was planning a meeting of the full Chebacco

Lake Environmental Coalition for February 26, 2021. Generally, the affiliation of various groups, which also includes the Ipswich River Watershed Association, will move forward in several fronts with different time horizons. Most immediately, work to permit the sustained maintenance of a clear channel in the Alewife Brook in Essex and ongoing implementation of that work will occur. Separately, the coalition will work further on how each participating organization can help the overall cause of the lake and its surrounding watershed. Finally, the group will have a long-term eye on research and advocacy in the watershed, including overall watershed management, nutrient management, and climate change.

The coalition would like the Town to consider assigning a liaison from Essex to the group. That person could keep me informed with respect to progress and I could keep the Board informed and assist where Essex-related support, approvals, or resources are concerned. The Chebacco Lake Association will likely take the lead role in the coalition and, eventually, there will be roles to be played by other communities in the watershed. All agreed that it is still a good idea to keep the Town Meeting warrant article that could provide a grant match in play at this time.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary, including discussion with respect to who an appropriate Essex liaison might be.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant (*)

At the last meeting, the Board provided further guidance concerning the formulation of the Annual Town Meeting warrant. I have revised the document in accordance with the Board's guidance. Also, the Board began to consider possibly delaying the date of the Annual Town Meeting from the bylaw-prescribed date of May 3, 2021 to early June (in order to allow for decent weather for an outdoor meeting, on a Saturday).

I asked Town Counsel for direction on the procedure for changing the Annual Town Meeting date. Last year, the Board had posted the meeting for a Monday night and, after posting, changed the date and time to the prior Saturday, requiring certain steps to be taken through the Moderator. This year, the Board has the opportunity to set the actual date and time within the original warrant document, provided that the Board signs separate Town Meeting and Town Election warrants (the Board usually signs a combined warrant).

Further, I inquired to Town Counsel concerning whether the Annual Town Election must still be held on the bylaw-prescribed date (which is May 10 this year). Since the special legislation that allowed for delayed local elections last year has now expired, and since no new legislation appears to be in the works for this year, the Annual Town Election does need to occur on the prescribed date of

May 10, 2021, which will mean that the election will occur before the Annual Town Meeting (the election is usually one week after the Annual Town Meeting).

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

No items.

M. Emergency Planning

No items.

N. Other Items

(1) Presidents' Day Holiday

The office was closed on February 15, 2021, in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on leave on February 10 and February 19, 2021.

This report is available at www.essexma.org on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.